

## Wax and Wicks

Ever wondered how candles are made? It is always with wax and wicks. Thus, a candle has a wick that is embedded in a wax to provide light and sometimes fragrance. Branches of bidara (*Ziziphus mauritiana*), mambu (*Azadirachta indica*), gaharu (*Aquilaria malaccense*), limau purut (*Citrus hystrix*), kedondong (*Spondia dulcis*), medang teja (*Cinnamomum iners*) and kayu manis (*C. verum*) are utilised as wicks. The wax acts as fuel, so when the wick is ignited it heats up to liquefy the wax which travels up the wick to sustain the flame. Wicks are usually made of flat braid textile-grade cotton, flat braid with paper fibres, cotton braid with paper core, and round cotton core amongst others, which are natural fibres. The wax used is usually from petroleum-derived paraffin or natural waxes such as soy wax, palm wax, and beeswax. Candles are of many types but the common ones include pillars, containers, tealights and votives that give an assortment of colours, shapes, and excitement to the users and surroundings. The more important characteristics of a candle are clean burning, reduced soot and smoke, stable full bodied beautiful flame, and lasts longer. Candle making has not fall short of creative ideas and designs despite light that is readily available with the switch of a button and readily available in all kinds of shapes, colours and designs. Although candle users can select the choices of candles available in the market, candles can also be made to suit their preferences. In other words, candles can be personalised. So fancy trying making your own candles with dried plant branches as wicks and call them candle sticks?

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